

# Implementation of Peer Support Programs

By Daniel B. Fisher, MD, PhD  
Executive Director,  
National Empowerment Center  
599 Canal St.  
Lawrence, MA 01840  
www.power2u.org  
800-POWER2U

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www.power2u.org

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## Creating a Culture of Recovery in the VA

The New Freedom Commission vision:

“a future when everyone labeled with  
mental illness will recover” and to do so  
“care must focus on increasing the  
consumers’ ability to successfully cope  
with life’s challenges, ....not just on  
managing symptoms.” (July, 2003)

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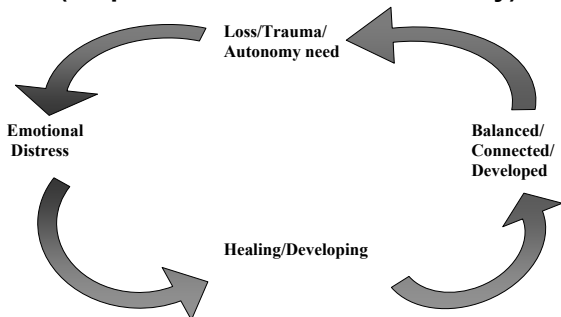
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## Cycle of Healing and Development (Empowerment Model of Recovery)



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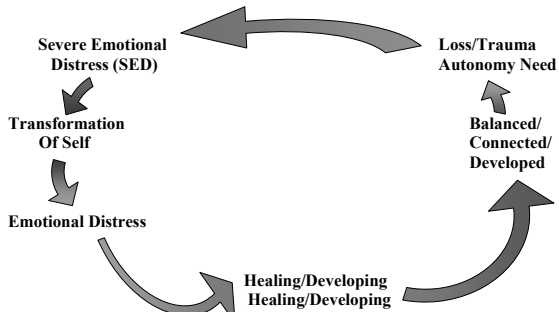
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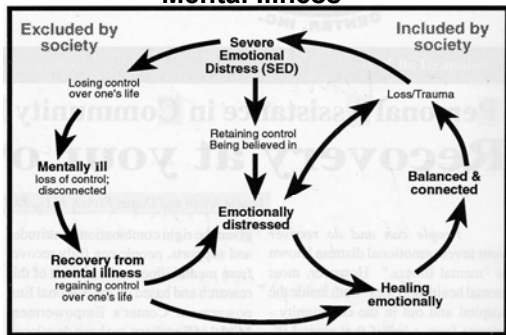
## Cycle of Transformation (Empowerment Model of Recovery)



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4

## Empowerment Model of Recovery from Mental Illness



Empowerment Model of Recovery from Mental Illness

by Daniel B. Fisher, M.D., Ph.D. and Laurie Ahern  
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## Advantages Model Offers for Peer Support

- It can happen to anyone (feel less isolated)
- It's not permanent
- People's own actions are vital to recovery
- Trauma always plays a role

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6



## Step One...

### Recovery Principles

People need to believe they will recover in order to recover.

### Consumer's Initial Beliefs

I have no hope, I will never recover.

### Peer Coach's Response

You can and will recover like I and many others.

### Consumer's New Belief's

I have confidence I can and will recover.



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7

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## How to Create a VA Recovery Culture

- Involve recovering vets in planning services
- Hire recovering vets to educate staff and consumers in a recovery model
- Engage recovering vets in the evaluation of satisfaction and progress towards recovery
- Ensure staff embody recovery principles in their work with each other as well as Vets

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8

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## How to Create a VA Recovery Culture

- Person centered planning
- Develop peer-run services for supported employment, social support, warmlines etc.
- Train, certify, and employ recovering vets to be peer coaches
- Develop recovery budgets which vets can control to increase choice

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## Step Two

### Recovery Principles

People need people to believe in them, to help them believe in themselves

### Consumer's Initial Beliefs

I don't believe in myself and no one else believes in me.

### Peer Coach's Response

I believe in you at your deepest level.

### Consumer's New Belief

I accept that other people believe in me and now I believe in myself.



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## Step Three

### Recovery Principles

Trust is the cornerstone of recovery.

### Consumer's Initial Beliefs

I can't trust anyone, including myself.

### Peer Coach's Response

You can learn to trust me through being trustworthy and this will help you trust yourself.

### Consumer's New Belief

I trust you and I now trust myself.



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## Step Four...

### Recovery Principles

Self Determination.

### Consumer's Initial Beliefs

I can't make my own decisions. Others must make my decisions because they know what is best for me.

### Peer Coach's Response

You can learn to make your own decisions based on your emerging self- knowledge.

### Consumer's New Belief

I can make my own decisions because I know myself.



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## Step Five

### Recovery Principles

Importance of having and following one's own dreams.

### Consumer's Initial Beliefs

I cannot trust my dreams so I should not dare to dream.

### Peer Coach's Response

I believe in your dreams as essential to your growth.

### Consumer's New Belief

It is OK and vital to dream; my dreams are more meaningful  
my dopamine ☺



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13

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## Step Six

### Recovery Principles

Connecting at a human level is essential.

### Consumer's Initial Beliefs

I am alone even in a crowd because I can only relate  
superficially; I am unlovable.

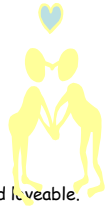
### Peer Coach's Response

You can connect at a deeply human level and people will  
want to connect with you; you are loveable.

### Consumer's New Belief

I feel worthy, capable of connecting at a deep level, and loveable.

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14

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## Step Seven

### Recovery Principles

All my feelings, including my anger, sadness, and fear are valid.

### Consumer's Initial Beliefs

My anger and other feelings are symptoms of my madness.

### Peer Coach's Response

Your anger, etc... is understandable and  
connected to relationships in your life.

### Consumer's New Belief

My anger etc... is a real part of me, teaching me  
about myself and my relationships.



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15

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## Step Eight...

### Recovery Principles

Relating with respect and dignity.

### Consumer's Initial Beliefs

I am unworthy of being treated or treating myself with respect and dignity.

### Peer Coach's Response

I respect and honor you as an equal human being.

### Consumer's New Belief

I deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

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## Step Nine...

### Recovery Principles

There is always meaning in what appears to be madness.

### Consumer's Initial Beliefs

When people say I am crazy. My thoughts and words are senseless.

### Peer Coach's Response

I can always find some truth about you and our relationship in your craziest sounding words.

### Consumer's New Belief

My craziest seeming thoughts and words are meaningful and always teach me something important about myself and my relationships.

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17

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## Step Ten...

### Recovery Principles

Expressing one's own voice.

### Consumer's Initial Beliefs

My voice is insignificant and unimportant and no one listens to me so I must rely on everyone else's voices.

### Peer Coach's Response

Your voice is the sacred spark that never dies; I am very interested in what you, at your deepest level have to say.

### Consumer's New Belief

My voice is important and others will listen.

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18

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## Principles of Recovery

- Trust
- Self-determination
- Hope: believing you'll recover
- Believing in the person
- Connecting at a human level

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19

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## Principles of Recovery

- People are always making meaning
- Having a voice of one's own
- All feelings are valid
- Important to follow dreams
- Relating with dignity and respect

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20

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## Implementing the New Freedom Commission

### Goal 2: Mental Health Care is Consumer and Family Driven

**Recommendation 2.1:** Develop an individualized plan of care for every adult with serious mental illness and based on recommendation from consumer issues subcommittee: promote individual recovery through self-determination

**Task 1:** Shift to person-centered recovery planning: based on person's own dreams and collaborative record keeping to build a self-authored, strengths-based story of person's life: requires consumer and staff training and quality assurance (Michigan)

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21

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## Implementing the New Freedom Commission

### Goal 2: Mental Health Care is Consumer and Family Driven

Recommendation 2.2: Involve consumers fully in orienting the system towards recovery

Task 1: Consumer leaders will set up National and State Recovery Initiative Consumer Task Forces

- a. The work groups will educate and advise the leadership of the critical organizations on ways to adopt a recovery-based system

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## Implementing the New Freedom Commission

### Goal 2: Mental Health Care is Consumer and Family Driven

Recommendation 2.2: Involve consumers fully in orienting the system towards recovery

Task 2: Work Groups will collaborate with administrative leaders to develop National and State Recovery Initiative action agendas:

- a. To involve consumers in the planning and evaluation of services at the federal, state and local levels by requiring 25% consumer participation in planning bodies of entities receiving federal funding with provision of recovery training for those consumers and the boards; also the work groups will prioritize the action steps that consumers for a given area most want to accomplish

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## Implementing the New Freedom Commission

### Goal 2: Mental Health Care is Consumer and Family Driven

Recommendation 2.2: Involve consumers fully in orienting the system towards recovery

Task 2: Work Groups will develop National and State Recovery Initiative action agendas:

- b. Develop more consumer-run organizations: states should use at least 10% of their block grant money to develop state-wide consumer organizations and consumer-run social support/supported employment centers, warmlines, crisis respite centers

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**Implementing the New Freedom Commission**

**Goal 2: Mental Health Care is Consumer and Family Driven**

**Recommendation 2.2: Involve consumers fully in orienting the system towards recovery**

**Task 2: Work Groups will develop National and State Recovery Initiative action agendas:**

- c. Involve consumers in the training of all stakeholders in recovery: states should require all provider organizations receiving federal funding to engage consumers in training their staff in recovery principles, eliminate seclusion and restraint, and how to facilitate peer support

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**Implementing the New Freedom Commission**

**Goal 2: Mental Health Care is Consumer and Family Driven**

**Recommendation 2.3: Align federal programs to improve access and accountability**

**Task 1: Shift the funding mechanisms to support increased consumer control and choice (individual recovery budgets set up with Medicaid and other funding sources)**

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26

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**Goal 2**

**Implementing the New Freedom Commission**

**Goal 2: Mental Health Care is Consumer and Family Driven**

**Recommendation 2.3: Align federal programs to improve access and accountability**

**Task 2: Expand the range of services and supports**

- a. Expand the range of peer-run services
- b. Develop peer specialists to work as bridgers between clinical and peer-run services
- c. Peers as professional
- d. Peers in mutual support
- e. Expand the use of personal assistance services for consumers

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27

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## How a Recovery Culture can Improve Clinical Practice

- Reduces Risk of Violence or Suicide
- Alliance Instead of Compliance
- Improves Motivation
- Improved Team Building

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28

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## How a Recovery Culture can Improve Clinical Practice

- Decreases Burnout
- Improves Cultural Competence
- Better Integrated with the Community
- Better Suited to Substance Abuse

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29

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## Long-term studies: people can recover from severe mental illness

Study	Sample Size	Follow-Up (in years)	% Significantly Recovered
Bleuler (1972)	208	23	53%-68%
Huber et al. (1979)	502	22	57%
Ciompi & Muller (1976)	289	37	53%
Tsuang et al. (1979)	186	35	46%
Harding et al. (1987)	269	32	62-68%

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